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⇒THE HEBREW STUDENT.←

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SOME “HEBREW” FACTS.

BY THE EDITOR.

This statement might better have been headed “Some Facts about Hebrew.” When it has been read, perhaps the caption “Some Facts about The Hebrew Summer School” may suggest itself as more appropriate. Be this as it may, it is thought that the statement deserves a hearing, not because of any merit it possesses in itself, but for the sake of the facts presented,—facts which are certainly of a nature to interest all who believe in an *educated* ministry. These facts are stated briefly and candidly. That they *are* facts, the members of the “School” will testify.

1. *The Members.*—At the second session of the Hebrew Summer School, held at Morgan Park, July 11th–Aug. 19th, there were present *sixty* regular members, besides several who, for various reasons, were not so identified with the school as to be counted full members. Over *one hundred* had engaged accommodations, and as many would have been present; had not the announcement been made three months beforehand that there was room for no more.

Of the sixty actual members, three were ladies, the remainder gentlemen. The number included Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, United Presbyterians, Episcopalian, Reformed Episcopalian, Congregationalists, O. S. Presbyterians, and Seventh Day Baptists. Of the sixty, thirty-five were pastors, fifteen, students of divinity, and seven, teachers. Thirty-three Colleges and Universities were represented, and twelve Divinity Schools. The members of the school represented seventeen

States and Countries : California, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Of the sixty members, fifty-three had enjoyed college training, and forty-four were graduates or members of theological seminaries. The average age of the students was thirty-three years.

2. *The Work Accomplished.*—The mere recital of the work done, of course, means nothing. The question is not one of *how much*, but one of *what kind*. Was the work thorough, accurate, substantial? Or was it hasty, careless, superficial? It will undoubtedly be the thought of many that the amount of work recounted below *could not have been done and done well*, in mid-summer, by worn-out ministers who were taking a vacation. Yet the character of the instructors, and of the men who received the instruction, would seem to be an indication of the character of the work. It is unnecessary to say that more was accomplished than had been promised by the Instructor, or than had been expected by the members. A brief sketch of the work is here given:

The Beginners' Class, numbering sixteen, made fifty-four recitations, in the course of which they (1) committed to memory the first chapter of Gen., (2) translated critically Gen. II-XII, (3) did a little extempore translation in I Samuel and the Psalms, (4) memorized three hundred words, and (5) learned the essentials of the Grammar, with the exception of a portion of the noun. During the last week some attention was given to extempore reading, and the class performed the work with remarkable ease. This was the work of the *first* section; the second section did not do quite so much.

The Reviewers' Class was divided into three sections. The first section (1) committed the first four chapters of Genesis, (2) read critically, Genesis V-XVII, and (3) studied Gesenius' Grammar, taking up in a most thorough manner the Verb and the Noun. The second and third sections did practically the same work; they (1) committed Gen. I, (2) read critically Gen. II-XIV, (3) memorized three hundred words, (4) read extempore the Books of I Sam. and Ruth, (5) reviewed the essentials of the Grammar. The members of this class in nearly every case did also the work of one or both of the upper classes.

The Extempore Class was engaged three hours every day. The first section read Genesis, Exodus I-XX, Deuteronomy I-XII, Joshua I-XIV, Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, Hosea, eighty-one Psalms, Proverbs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther and Nehemiah. In addition to this they prepared each day for recitation *fifty Hebrew words*, in all nearly twelve hundred words. The second section did about two-thirds of the work done by the first section. The whole number of pages, nearly five hundred, was read in 80 hours, making an average of six pages an hour. Genesis, eighty-eight pages, was read in thirteen hours.

The Exegetical Class.—This class was made up of members from the other

classes. One hour a day was spent in the recitation-room. The Prophecy of Nahum was studied critically and exegetically. With this prophecy as a basis of study, many of the most important general questions relating to Introduction and Interpretation were discussed.

Especial attention was given to the pronunciation of the Hebrew. Every class, from the lowest to the highest, received constant and continuous drill in this particular.

The Lectures.—One of the most interesting features of the work was the Lecture Course. Each afternoon at four o'clock, the School assembled in the Library and listened to the discussion of important subjects, relating chiefly to the Old Testament, by distinguished scholars and ministers.

3. *The Methods.*—The enthusiastic spirit of the members, and the large amount of work performed, are due in great measure, it is believed, to the methods employed. Grammatical instruction was imparted almost wholly by the Inductive method, the student being required first to learn the facts in the case, and after that the principles taught by these facts. Every class was required to memorize each day a few of the most frequently occurring words, so that at the end of the work, the lowest class had acquired a vocabulary of three to four hundred words, the highest one of twelve to fifteen hundred words. And with these words at command, reading at *sight* was a possibility, not only for those who had long studied the language, but also for those who within a few days had for the first time even *seen* a Hebrew letter. The memorizing of words is without doubt a dry and difficult business, but for him who has once experienced the pleasure of reading at sight, it no longer seems so dry and difficult as before. The use of these methods, *in all the classes*, aroused an interest in the study, and made men feel that the Hebrew *could* be learned, a feeling not generally entertained, it is to be regretted, among the clergy.

4. *The Translation of Nahum.*—The crowning feature of the School was the work of the so-called Translation-committee, which was composed, for the most part, of those who were members of the Exegetical Class. The work of this committee forms the basis of this number of The Hebrew Student. The committee as a whole translated the Hebrew. Sub-committees made translations of the Septuagint, Chaldee and Vulgate versions. The work speaks for itself. It is to be understood that it is the work of the students, not of the Instructors. The latter are responsible for no part of it except its publication. The value of the work to the men engaged in it cannot easily be over-estimated. The various discussions arising upon the shades of meaning, the exact construction of

words, the order of thought, etc., could not but be of the greatest advantage. That the Translation will be of service to others is, perhaps, not so evident, yet the very fact that men who do not profess to be specialists, whose work it is to preach, by whom time for this kind of work is obtained only with great difficulty,—the fact that *such* men can do and have done *such* work, should be, yes, *will* be, an inspiration and a blessing to many a pastor who earnestly desires a familiar acquaintance with the sacred tongue, but cannot see his way clear to undertake the work which is necessary in order to obtain it.

This translation was made in the following manner :

The work of preparing the first draft of the translation including division into parallelisms was assigned to a sub-committee of three, called the Executive Committee. Their reported translation was the basis of the discussion and translation for the Full Committee. This report was acted upon verse by verse and member by member, and as adopted, was called the provisional translation. In this part of the work a majority of the members present determined all questions. After a complete provisional translation of the prophecy had been made, it was reconsidered by the Full Committee, verse by verse ; and the form then agreed upon was called the final translation. During the course of the revision, however, no change was made in the provisional translation except by order of a majority of all the members of the Full Committee. The Committee was governed in all decisions by the rules which generally obtain in deliberative assemblies.

5. *The Patrons of the School.*—Three weeks before the opening of the School, it was not known where the money was to be obtained to pay its expenses, since it had been announced that no charges for tuition would be made. When this announcement was published, it was not supposed that so many would be in attendance, or that so much additional instruction would be required. The financial outlook was indeed a gloomy one. A statement of the facts in the case was laid before a few of the most prominent laymen in the country, men who were known to be in sympathy with all efforts seeking to raise the intellectual standard of the ministry. The appeal met with a most hearty response, and at the opening of the School, there was deposited in the bank a sum of money sufficient, together with a donation from the members of the School, to pay the expenses.

Space does not permit more “facts” to be presented. Nor is it best, at this time, to refer to what may reasonably be expected in the future. It is, however, not too much to say, that from the present outlook, there seems to be a work for The Hebrew Summer School to do. That this work may be done, and indeed, done well, is, we are sure, the prayer of all.